



US009266581B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Dal Pozzo et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,266,581 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Feb. 23, 2016**

(54) **ACTUATION DEVICE FOR A CONTROL CABLE FOR A BICYCLE GEARSHIFT**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 637 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/310,438**

(22) Filed: **Dec. 2, 2011**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2012/0137819 A1 Jun. 7, 2012

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Dec. 3, 2010 (EP) 10015246

(51) **Int. Cl.**

F16C 1/10 (2006.01)

G05G 1/00 (2008.04)

B62K 23/06 (2006.01)

B62M 25/04 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **B62K 23/06** (2013.01); **B62M 25/04** (2013.01); **Y10T 74/20438** (2015.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC B62K 23/02; B62K 23/04; B62K 23/06;
B62M 25/00; B62M 25/02; B62M 25/04;
Y10T 74/20438

USPC 74/502.2, 488, 489, 473.14, 473.15,
74/504-507, 577 R, 577 M, 577 S

See application file for complete search history.

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Primary Examiner — Adam D Rogers

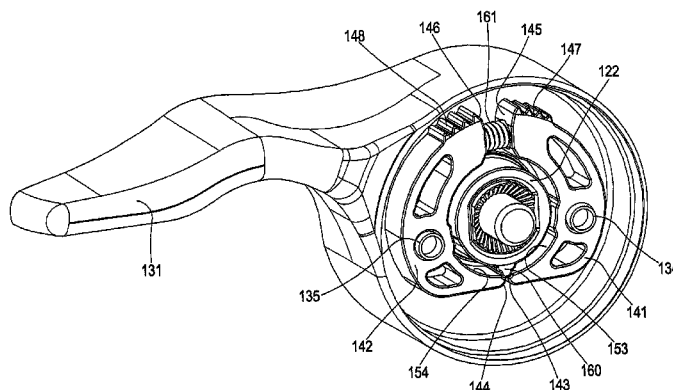
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(57)

ABSTRACT

The disclosed device controls a cable associated with a bicycle gearshift and is particularly configured for securing the body of the device on the forward-facing end of racing bicycle handlebars. A cable winding bobbin, having an internally toothed crown, is provided in the device's body and a drive mechanism rotates the bobbin in the chosen direction to achieve predetermined angular positions. A ratchet mechanism, located between the lever and the toothed crown, includes opposite rocker arms with cam profiles curved away from each other, and a toothed sector for engaging the toothed crown. A pointer is located to be selectively engaged with at least one of the rocker arms so that engagement results in the rocker arm's toothed section being away from the toothed crown, and disengagement results in the rocker arm's toothed section being engaged with the toothed crown.

9 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets



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FIG. 1

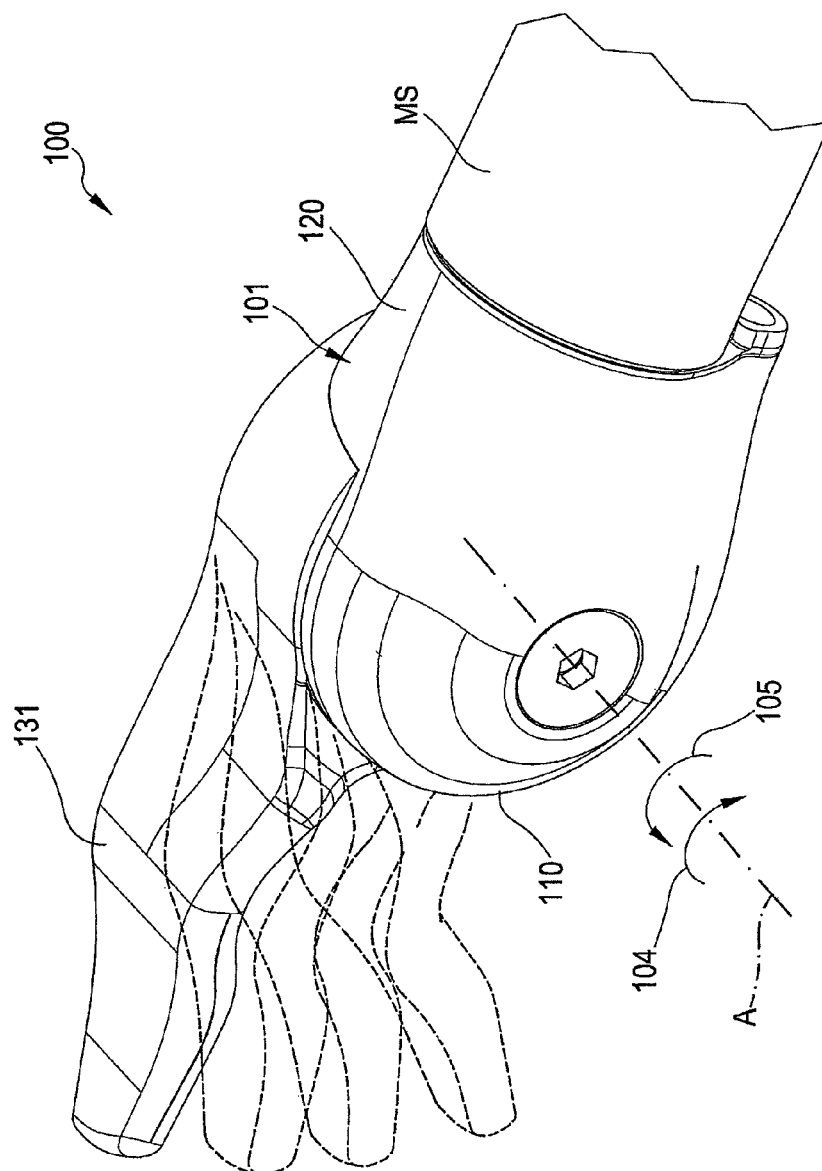
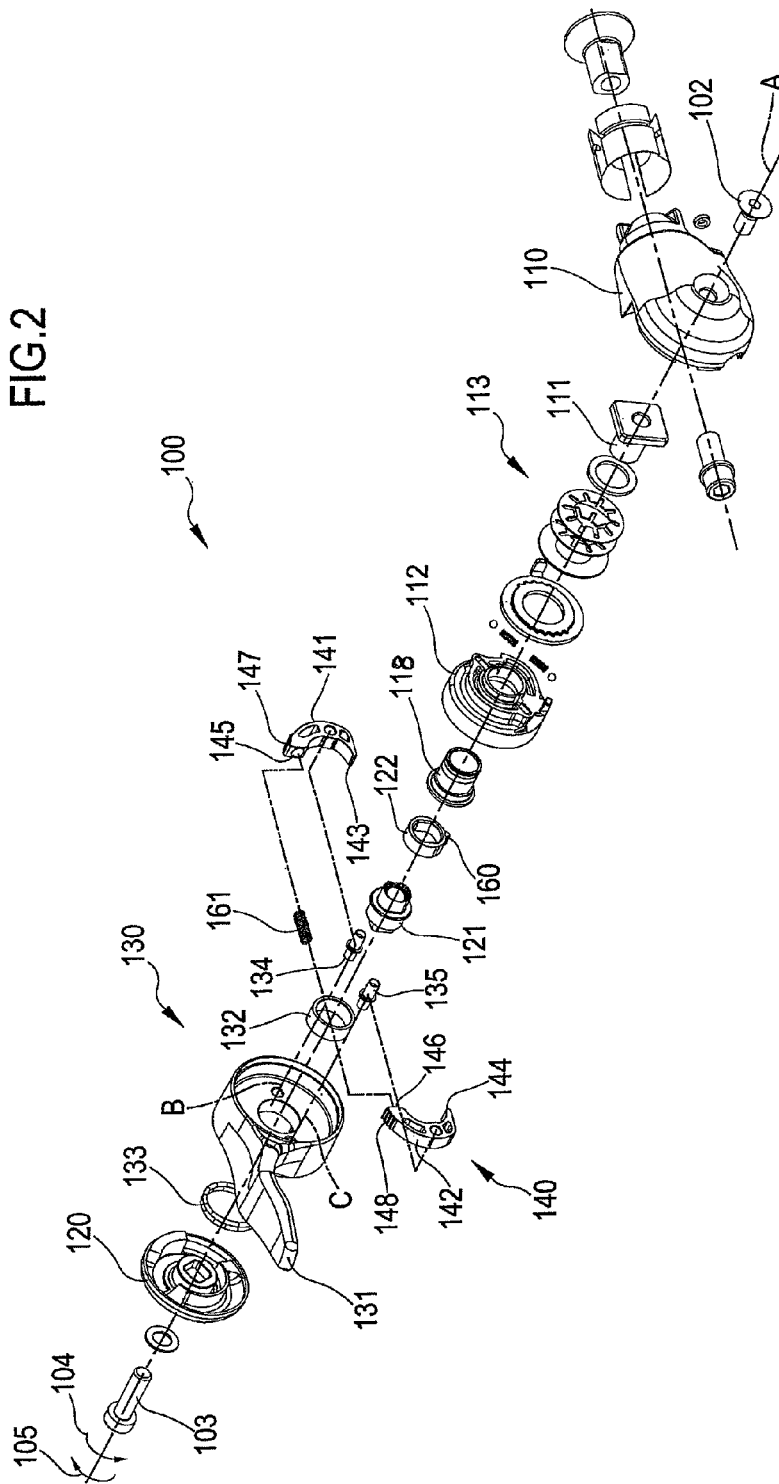


FIG. 2



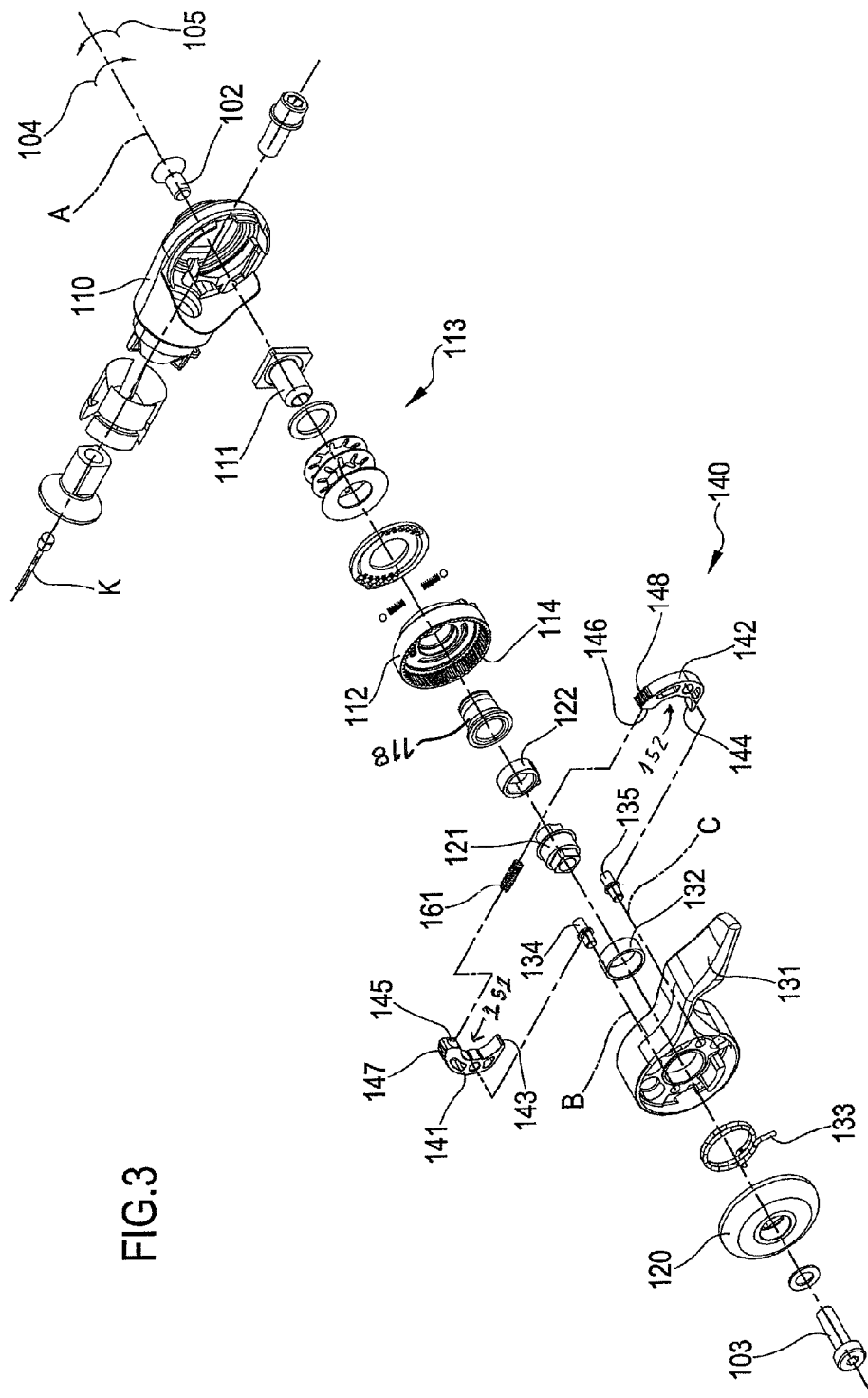


FIG.3

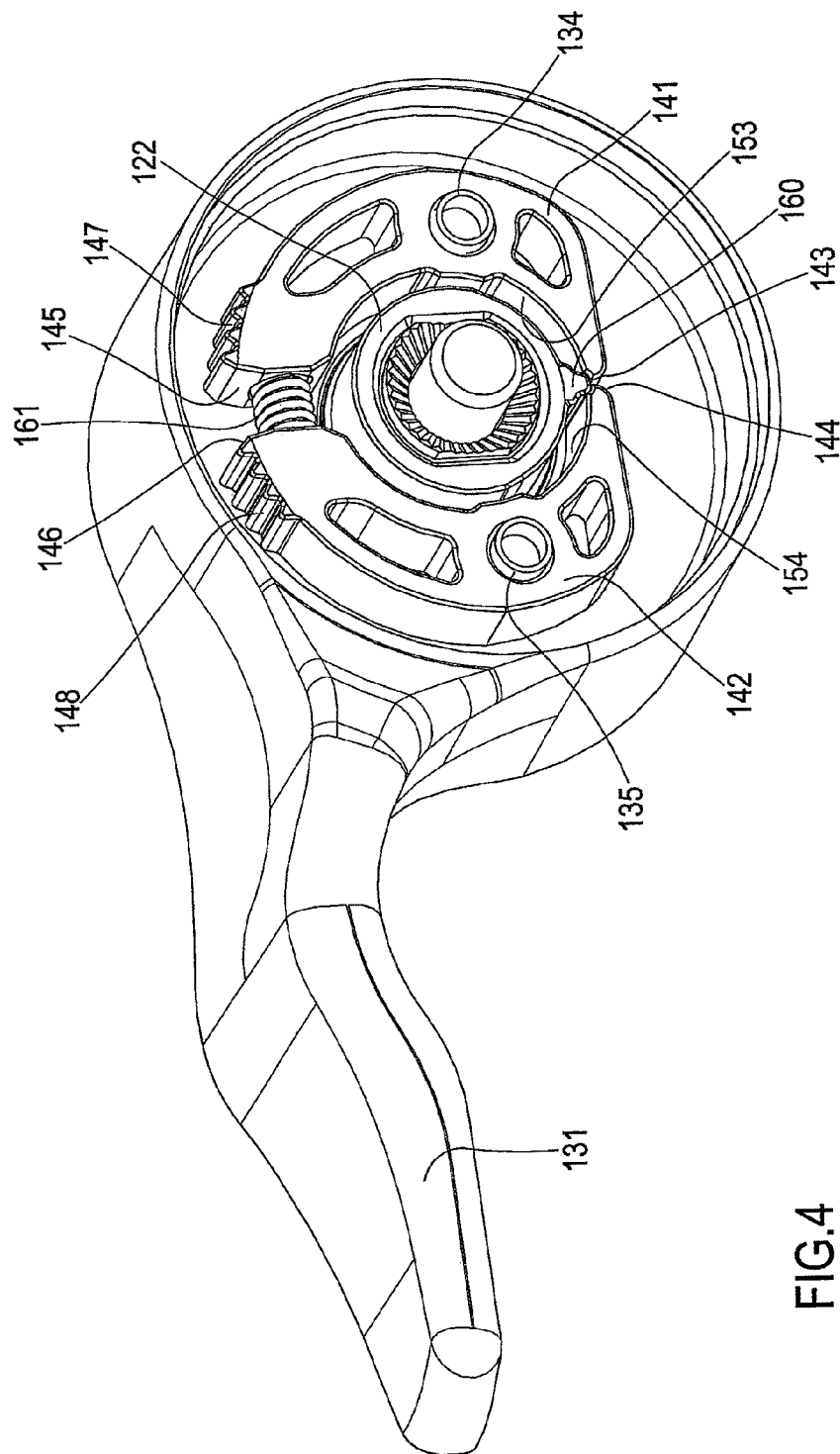
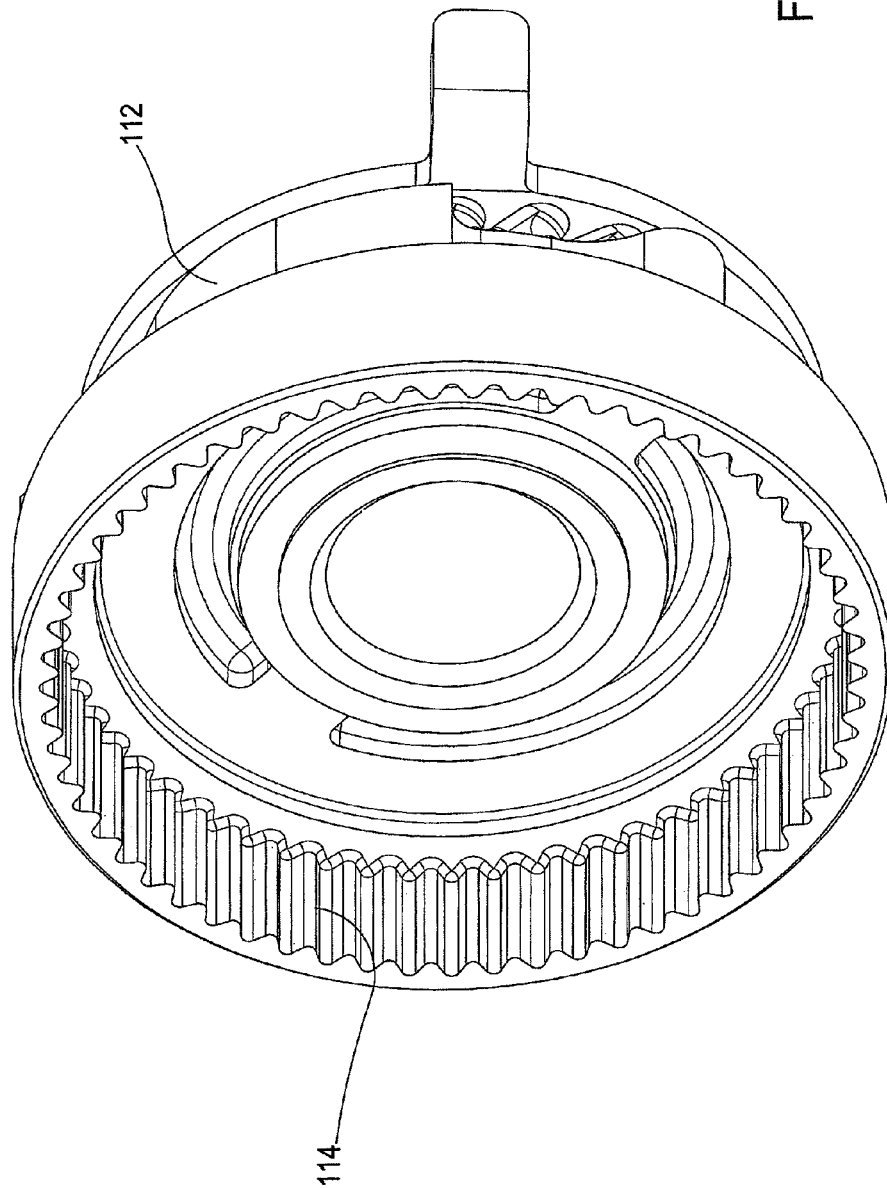
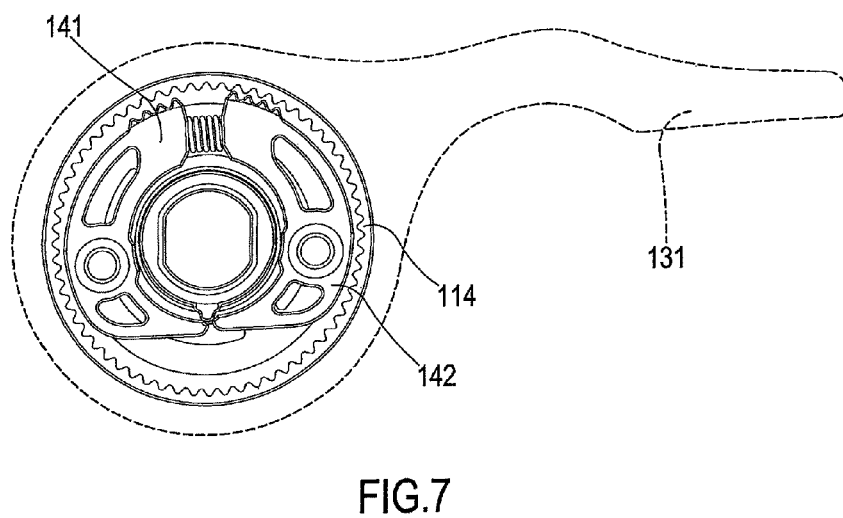
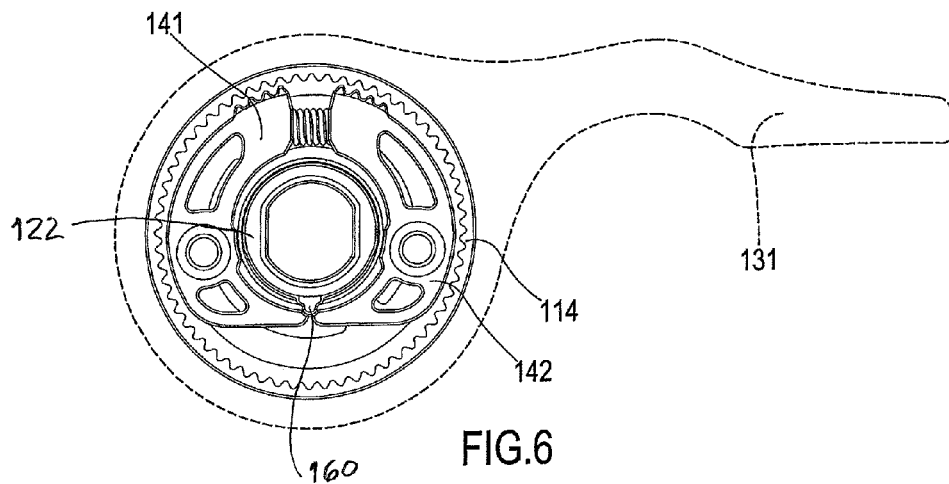
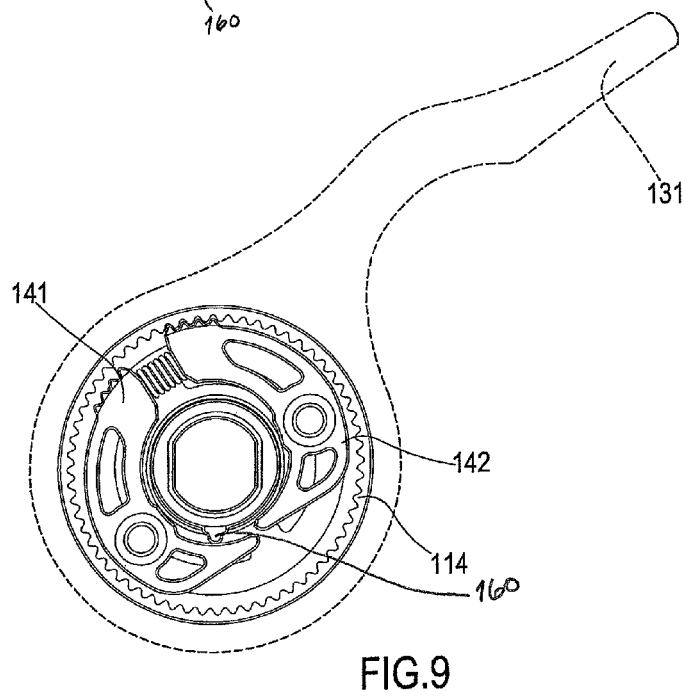
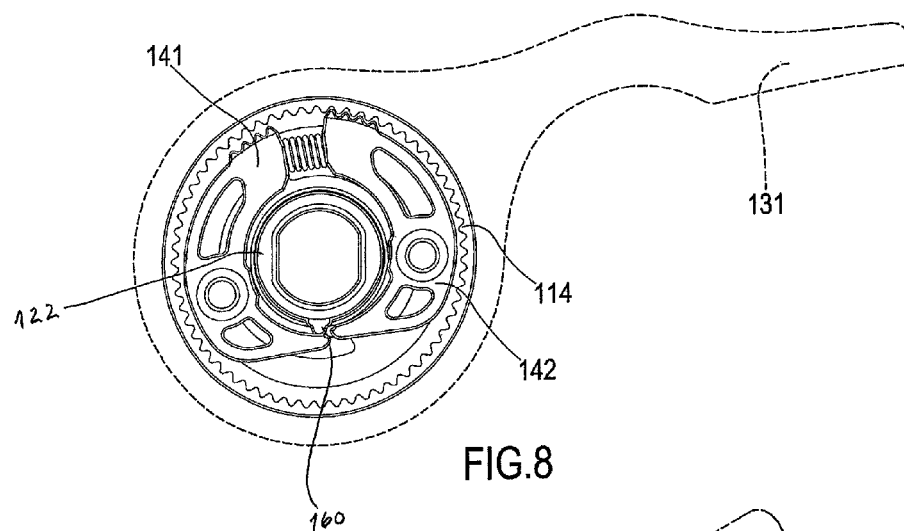
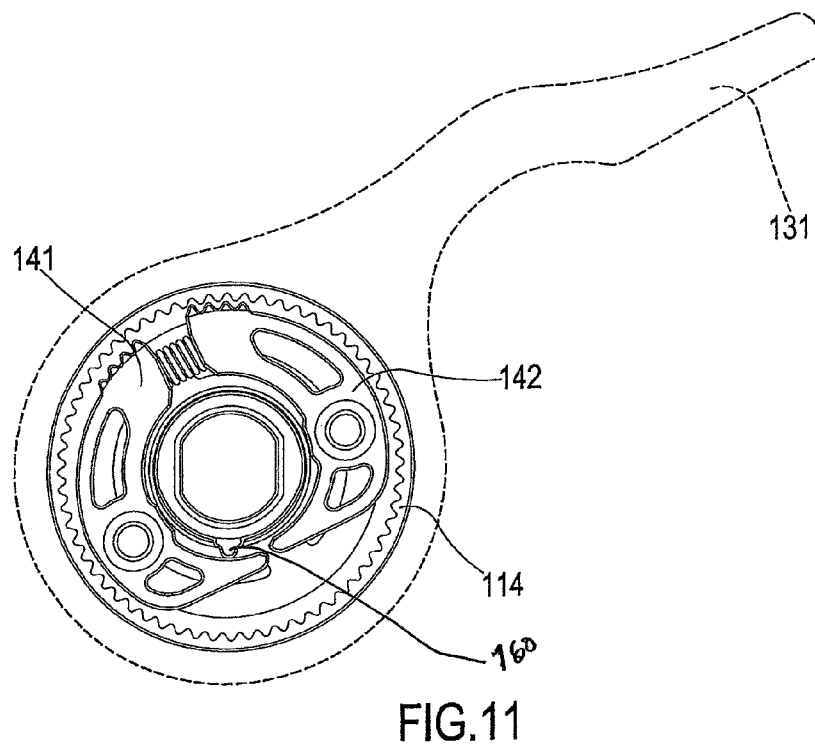
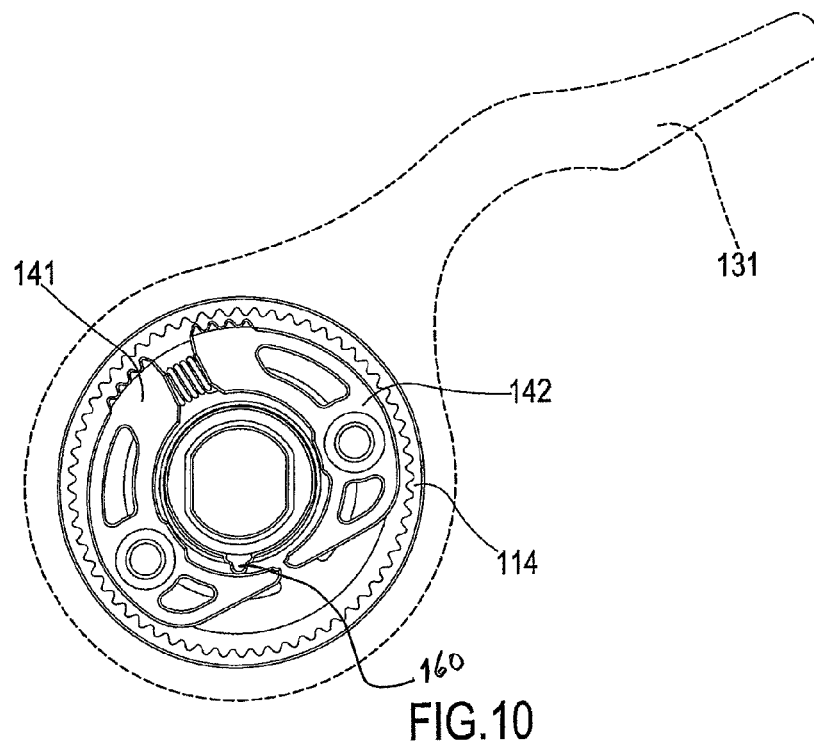


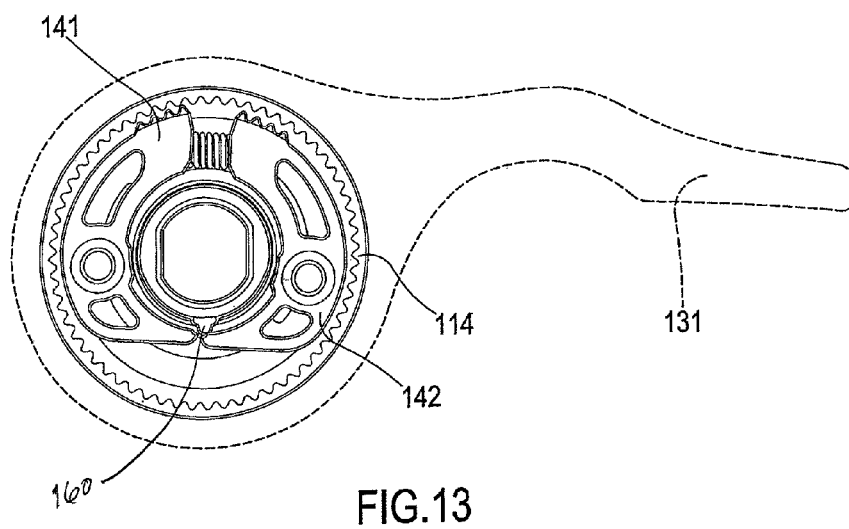
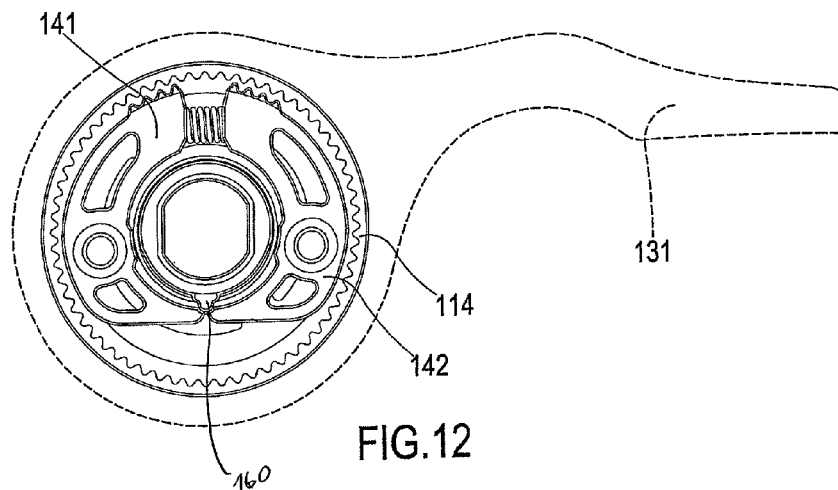
FIG. 4

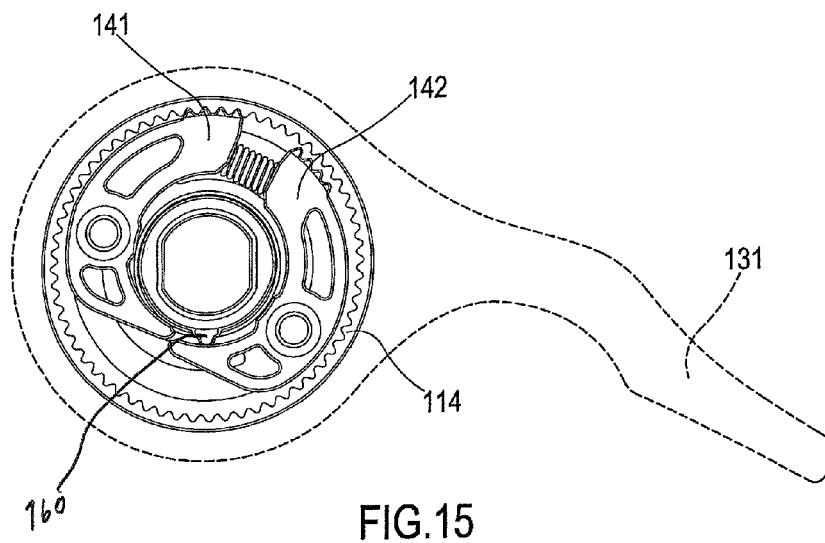
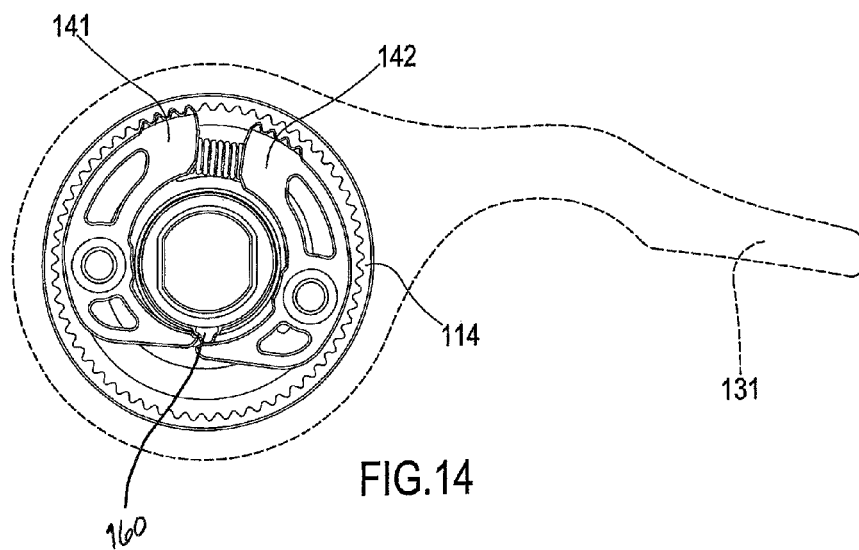


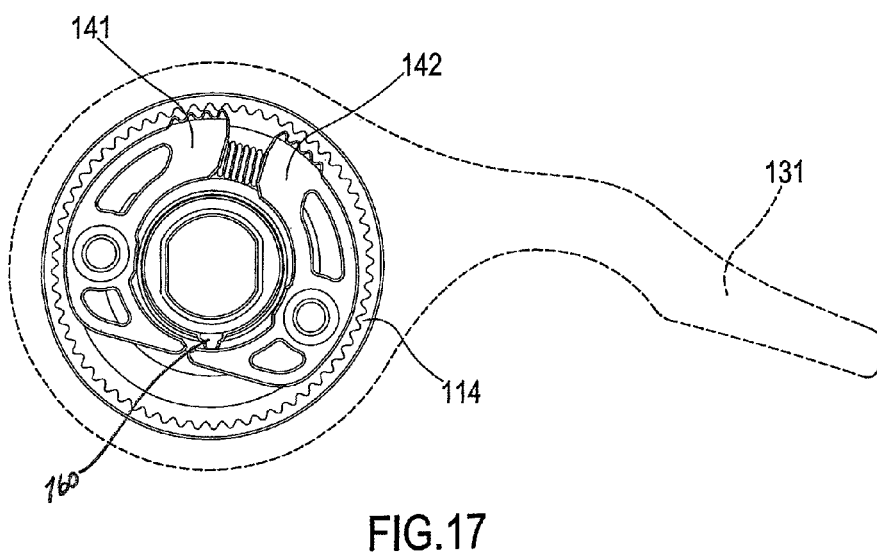
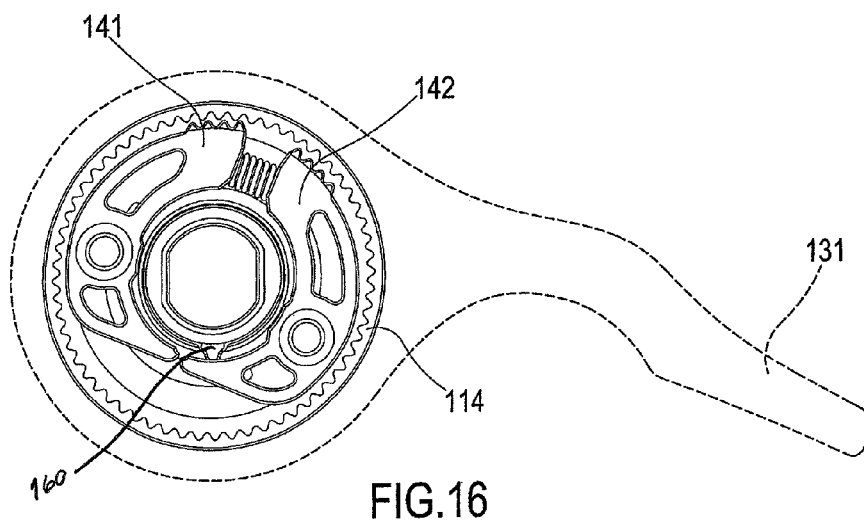












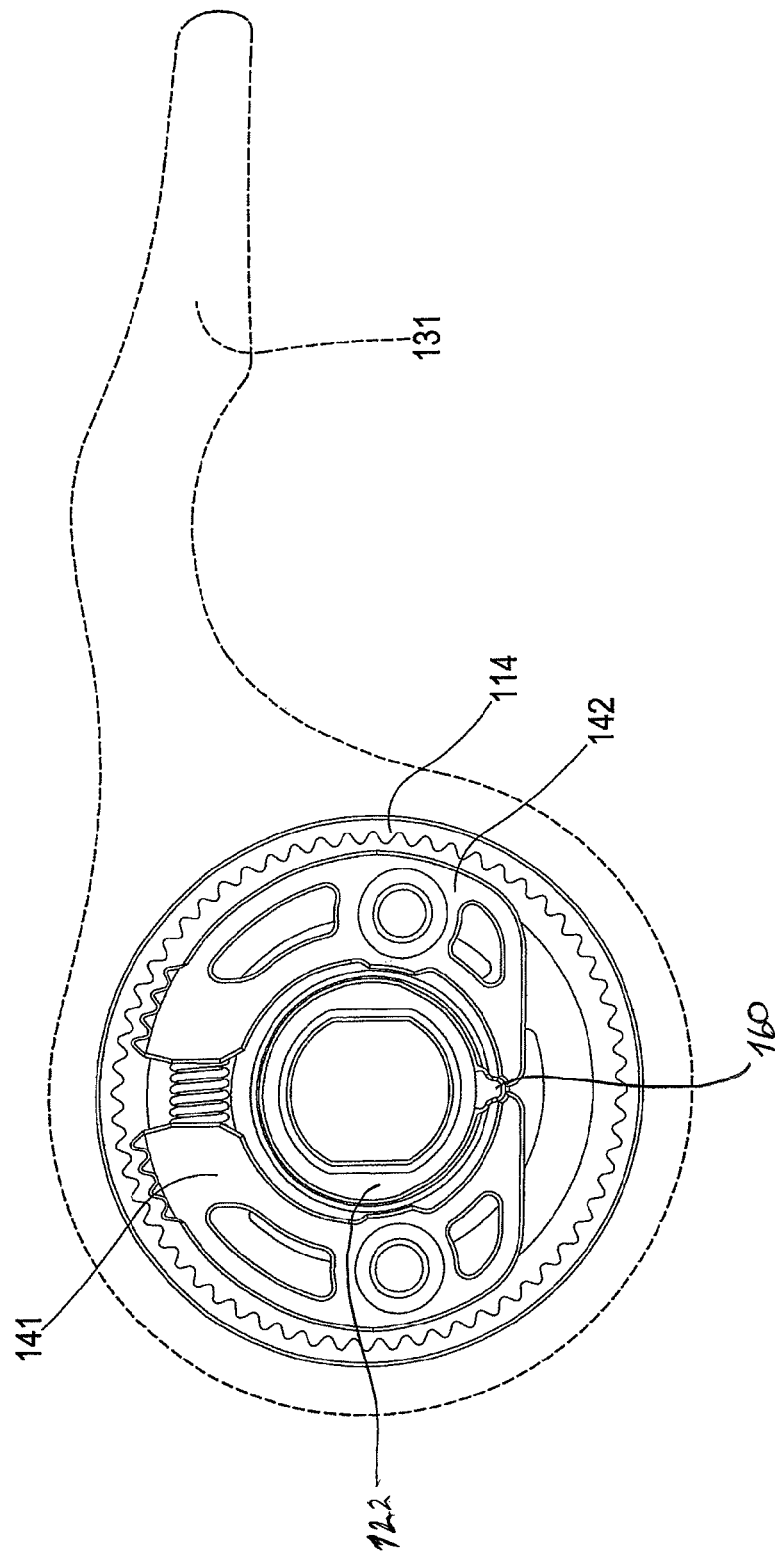


FIG. 18

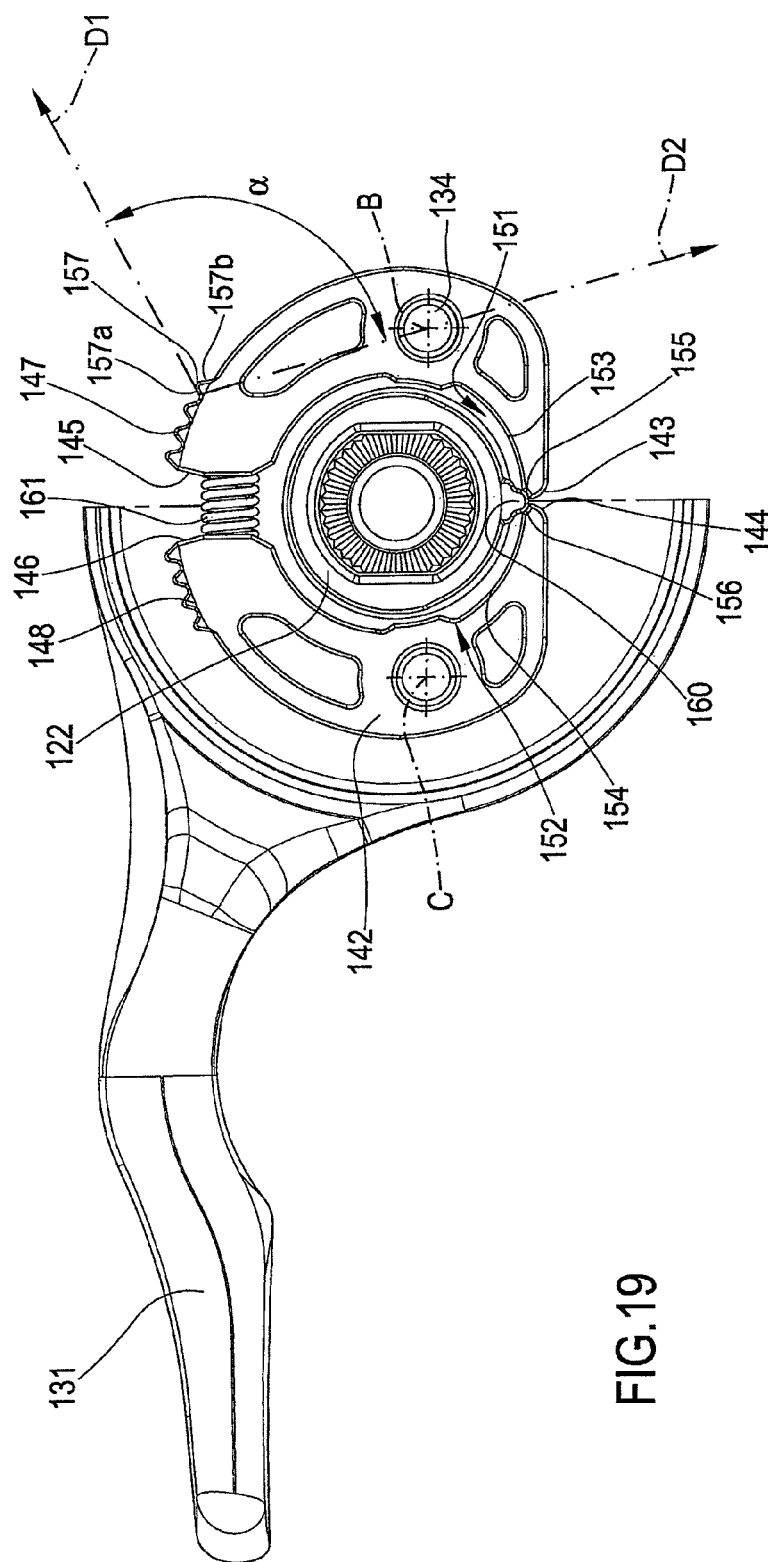


FIG. 19

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ACTUATION DEVICE FOR A CONTROL CABLE FOR A BICYCLE GEARSHIFT

BACKGROUND

The present invention concerns an actuation device for a control cable for a bicycle gearshift, in particular a so-called bar-end device suitable for being mounted on the forward-facing end of racing bicycle handlebars.

A bicycle is normally provided with a rear derailleur associated with the chainset, which consists of a series of coaxial gear wheels (pinions), having different diameters and numbers of teeth, fixedly connected to the hub of the rear wheel.

A bicycle is typically also provided with a front derailleur associated with the crankset, which consists of a series of gear wheels (toothed crowns) having different diameters and numbers of teeth, associated with a pin of the bottom bracket assembly set in rotation by a pair of pedals.

In both cases, the derailleur engages a transmission chain extending in a closed loop between the chainset and the crankset, shifting the chain on gear wheels having different diameters and numbers of teeth, so as to obtain different transmission ratios.

In particular, the expression downward gearshifting is used when the chain goes from a gear wheel having a larger diameter to a gear wheel having a smaller diameter, and the expression upward gearshifting when the chain moves from a gear wheel having a smaller diameter to a gear wheel having a greater diameter. Regarding this, it should be noted with reference to the front derailleur that downward gearshifting corresponds to passing to a lower transmission ratio and upward gearshifting corresponds to passing to a higher transmission ratio, vice-versa with reference to the rear derailleur, downward gearshifting corresponds to passing to a higher transmission ratio and upward gearshifting corresponds to passing to a lower transmission ratio.

The movement in the two directions of a derailleur is obtained through an actuation device mounted so as to be easily operated by the cyclist; in the case of a so-called bar-end device, mounting takes place on the handlebars, at the ends thereof.

Conventionally, the actuation device for the front derailleur is located on the left handgrip of the handlebars, and vice-versa the actuation device for the rear derailleur is located on the right handgrip.

More specifically, in a mechanical gearshift, each derailleur is moved between the gear wheels, in a first direction by a pulling action exerted by a normally sheathed inextensible cable (commonly called Bowden cable), and in a second opposite direction by releasing the traction on the cable and/or by the elastic return action of a spring provided in the derailleur itself.

Normally, the direction in which the movement is caused by the release of the traction of the cable and/or by the return spring is that of downward gearshifting; vice-versa, the pulling action of the control cable takes place in the direction of upward gearshifting, in which the chain moves from a wheel having a smaller diameter to a wheel having a greater diameter.

In the actuation device, the control cable is actuated in traction or in release through winding and unwinding on a rotor element, commonly called cable-winding bobbin, the rotation of which is controlled by the cyclist with a suitable control lever. Single-lever control is made necessary by the positioning at the end of the handlebars, where it would be complex and not very practical to use two control levers, as it

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occurs—on the other hand—for different types of devices, located in different parts of the handlebars.

In any case, the actuation device must ensure that the bobbin is held still in rotation in a number of predetermined angular positions, corresponding to the different positions of the derailleur required by the different ratios, i.e. on the different gear wheels of the gearshift. This function is obtained with so-called indexers, a great many types of which are known in the field, variously acting between the bobbin and the fixed casing of the device.

In more conventional so-called bar-end devices, the single-lever control acts substantially directly on the cable-winding bobbin, so that each angular position of the cable-winding bobbin, as defined by the indexing means, corresponds to a precise angular position of the control lever.

The search for better aerodynamics in a competition has led to the provision of a quite complex control device, described in EP-1837275-A2, which is intended to return into the neutral position. It is the purpose of the present invention to provide a simplified device that allows the return of the control lever into its neutral position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The features and advantages of the invention will fully understood from the description of preferred embodiments with reference to the attached drawings.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a device according to the invention;

FIGS. 2 and 3 are exploded perspective views of the device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a part of the device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another part of the device of FIG. 1;

FIGS. 6 to 18 are a series of plan views showing successive positions during the operation of the device; and,

FIG. 19 is a plan view with a partial section.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The present invention provides a device for controlling a cable associated with a bicycle gearshift. The device has a casing configured for attachment on the end of bicycle handlebars to secure the body of the device. A cable winding bobbin, having an internally toothed crown, is provided in the device's body and a drive mechanism rotates the bobbin in the chosen direction to achieve predetermined angular positions. The drive mechanism includes a lever that is actionable from a neutral position to obtain downward or upward gearshifting is biased toward the neutral position. A ratchet mechanism, located between the lever and the toothed crown, includes opposite rocker arms that pivot parallel axes that are also parallel to the main axis. Each rocker arm has an arched shape cam, such that the arches of the cam profiles curve away from each other, and includes a toothed sector for engaging with the toothed crown. A pointer, that is stationary with respect to the casing, is located to be engaged with at least one of the rocker arms so that it can be engaged and disengaged with a respective cam. A thruster urges the rocker arms toward the neutral position of the pointer whereby engagement of the pointer with a respective cam profile results in the rocker arm's toothed section being away from the toothed crown, and disengagement of the pointer with a respective cam profile results in the rocker arm's toothed section being engaged with the toothed crown.

This device allows the desired operation in which the lever can go back into its neutral position at the end of gearshifting. Indeed, the lever is not directly fixedly connected to the bobbin (or to the toothed crown, non-rotatably mounted to the bobbin), but the ratchet mechanism is arranged between them, which keeps the lever released from the toothed crown with the exception of the moment when gearshifting is commanded. At that moment, according to whether it is downward or upward gearshifting, the angular movement of the lever in one direction or in the other causes a movement of the rocker arms on the lever itself such that one or the other of the two rocker arms is moved on the lever until its toothed sector is taken into engagement with the toothed crown; in this way, the angular movement of the lever is transmitted to the toothed crown and to the cable-winding bobbin. Once the action on the lever by the cyclist has ended, the cable-winding bobbin and the toothed crown are held by the indexing means in the position reached, whereas the lever tends to go back into the neutral position under the action of the elastic means, without the ratchet mechanism opposing it.

Preferably, the thruster is a spring compressed between the second ends of the two rocker arms. Indeed, since the two rocker arms work in opposition to one another, it is sufficient to have a spring suitably arranged between the two rocker arms to generate the desired thrust on each of them, without it thus being necessary to have a spring for each of them.

Preferably, in the neutral position the pointer is engaged with a first portion of the cam profile of both of the rocker arms. In this way, the neutral position—reached thanks to the action of the elastic means—is safely maintained since the engagement of the pointer with both of the cam profiles ensures that neither of the two toothed sectors can go into engagement with the toothed crown.

Preferably, the elastic means comprise a spring acting between the casing and the lever, to take the lever into its neutral angular position. Such a spring can be a simple ring-shaped torsion spring, mounted in the casing coaxially to the main axis (A) of the device and fixedly connected at one end to the casing, at the other to the lever.

Preferably, each of the rocker arms is hinged to the lever by means of a respective pin, formed on the lever, on the rocker arm or structurally independent.

Preferably, the pivot axis of each rocker arm is closer to the first than to the second end of the rocker arm. Maximising the distance between the pivot axis and the toothed sector, which is close to the second end of the rocker arm, allows the thrusting direction of the rocker arm on the toothed sector when the latter is engaged with the toothed crown to be almost the same for all the single teeth of the toothed sector; all of the teeth of the toothed sector thus participate in a substantially equal manner to the thrust. This allows efficient sizing of the toothed sector, which is important since the device must be as light as possible, given its use on racing bicycles.

Preferably, the toothing profile of the toothed sector and of the toothed crown are such as to promote the snap disengagement, one tooth at a time, when the sector moves with the lever going back into its neutral angular position while the toothed crown stays still.

More specifically, the toothing profile of the toothed sector comprises teeth with a thrusting side facing towards the second end of the rocker arm and a release side facing the opposite way, in which the thrusting side is oriented—with reference to a cross section with respect to the main axis (A) of the device—so that a half-line tangent to the thrusting side and oriented towards the outside of the device forms an angle equal to or greater than 90° with a half-line that from the thrusting side points towards the pivot axis of the rocker arm.

Description of the Preferred Embodiments

The figures show an actuation device **100** for the control cable K of a front gearshift of a racing bicycle (not shown). With particular reference to FIG. 1, the device **100** is a so-called bar-end device, mounted at the left end MS of bicycle handlebars of the type used on racing bicycles, and even more specifically specialised bicycles for time trial racing; in such handlebars, the end MS faces forwards, with respect to the direction of forward motion of the bicycle.

The device **100** comprises a casing **101**, which is fixed to the handlebars M in a conventional manner, so as to itself be a substantial forward extension of the end MS of the handlebars. The casing **101** comprises a body **110** and a cover **120**, fixedly connected to one another through two threaded elements **102** and **103**, extending along an axis A. The axis A—as will be made clearer hereafter—is the main reference axis for the elements that form part of the device **100**; all indications of directions and the like, such as “axial”, “radial”, “circumferential” and “diametral”, will be made with reference to it; likewise, the indications “outwards” and “inwards” referring to radial directions must be taken as away from the axis A or towards the axis A. Around the axis A, two opposite angular directions are also defined, indicated with **104** and **105**, the first in the clockwise direction, the second in the anti-clockwise direction, observing the device **100** as represented in FIGS. 3 and 6-17.

In the casing **101**, there is a central pin **111**, fixed with respect to the body **110** of the casing **101** and extending along the axis A.

On the pin **111**, a cable-winding bobbin **112** is mounted free in rotation; the cable K to be actuated is fixed thereto and wound thereon. The bobbin **112** is connected to the casing **101** by an indexing assembly **113**, to hold the bobbin **112** in predetermined angular positions with respect to the casing **101**, according to the selected ratio of the gearshift. Such an assembly is per se conventional and is not part of the present invention; therefore, it will not be described in detail hereafter.

A counter-pin **116**, mounted on the pin **111** on an axially opposite side of the bobbin **112**, completes the rotary assembly of the bobbin **112** in the casing **101**.

In the casing **101** there is also a central tang **121**, fixed with respect to the cover **120** of the casing **101** and extending along the axis A. An annular element **122** is mounted on the tang **121**—non-rotatably fixed thereto.

The device **100** also comprises a drive mechanism, to obtain downward or upward gearshifting, generally indicated with **130**, acting on the bobbin **112** to rotate it in the angular directions **104** and **105** around the axis A.

The drive mechanism **130** comprises an internally toothed crown **114**, non-rotatably mounted to the bobbin **112**, and a lever **131**, that can be actuated by the cyclist and is angularly mobile with respect to the casing **101** around the axis A, in the angular directions **104** and **105** from a neutral position (shown in FIGS. 1, 4, 5, 6, 12, 18). The lever **131** is rotatably supported by means of a bush **132** mounted on the tang **121**, at the side of the annular element **122**, and elastic means (in particular a spring **133**) acting between the casing **101** and the lever **131**, to take the lever **131** into its neutral angular position.

The drive mechanism also comprises a ratchet mechanism **140** between the lever **131** and the toothed crown **114**.

The ratchet mechanism **140** comprises two opposite and symmetrically identical rocker arms **141** and **142**, hinged on an side of the lever **131** through two pins **134**, **135** arranged according to pivot axes B and C that are parallel to one another and to the main axis A of the device **100**. Each of the

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rocker arms **141** and **142** has an arched shape, wrapping around the axis A, extending from a first end **143**, **144** to a second end **145**, **146**; the first end **143** of the first rocker arm **141** is close to the first end **144** of the second rocker arm **142**, whereas the second end **145** of the first rocker arm **141** faces towards the second end **146** of the second rocker arm **142**, spaced from it in the substantially tangential direction with respect to the axis A.

On each rocker arm **141**, **142**, a respective toothed sector **147**, **148** is formed, formed on an outer side of the rocker arm **141**, **142**, close to the second end **145**, **146**. The toothed sector **147**, **148** has a toothing profile suitable for engagement with the toothing of the toothed crown **114**. The toothed crown **114** and the rocker arms **141**, **142** are substantially in the same axial position along the axis A, and therefore the toothed crown **114** is in a position in front of the toothed sectors **147**, **148**.

Again on each rocker arm **141**, **142**, a respective cam profile **151**, **152** is formed, formed on an inner side of the rocker arm **141**, **142**, adjacent to the first end **143**, **144**. The cam profile **151**, **152** comprises a main portion **153**, **154** extending substantially in the circumferential direction around the axis A, preceded by a greatly inclined short first portion **155**, **156**, adjacent to the first end **143**, **144** of the rocker arm **141**, **142**.

The cam profiles **151**, **152** are in contact engagement—according to the operating steps, which will be discussed later—with a pointer **160**, formed from an outer projection on the annular element **122**, see FIGS. 2 and 6, extending parallel to the axis A; the pointer **160** is stationary with respect to the casing **101** and faces radially outwards with respect to the axis A.

The ratchet mechanism **140** also comprises a thruster **161**, to thrust each rocker arm **141**, **142** around its pivot axis B, C, in the direction to push the second ends **145**, **146** of the rocker arms **141**, **142** away from the axis A. Preferably, the thruster **161** is a spring, compressed between the second ends **145**, **146** of the rocker arms **141**, **142**.

Each cam profile **151**, **152** is configured so that:

when the pointer **160** is engaged with the cam profile **151**, **152** of a rocker arm **141**, **142**, the toothed sector **147**, **148** of the same rocker arm is kept away from the toothed crown **114**;

when the pointer **160** is disengaged from the cam profile **151**, **152** of a rocker arm **141**, **142**, the toothed sector **147**, **148** of the same rocker arm is thrust into engagement with the toothed crown **114** by the thruster **161**.

Given the proximity of the first ends **143**, **144** of the rocker arms **141**, **142**, the pointer **160** is always engaged with at least one of the rocker arms **141**, **142**, on its cam profile **151**, **152**; in the neutral position of the lever **131**, the pointer **160** is engaged with the first portion **155**, **156** of the cam profiles **151**, **152** of both of the rocker arms **141**, **142**.

The rocker arms **141**, **142** are shaped and sized so that the pivot axis B, C of each rocker arm **141**, **142** is closer to the first end **143**, **144** than to the second end **145**, **146** of the rocker arm itself.

The toothing profile of the toothed sector **147**, **148** and of the toothed crown **114** are such as to promote the snap disengagement, one tooth at a time, when the toothed sector **147**, **148** moves with the lever **131** going back into its neutral position while the toothed crown **114** stays still.

More specifically, the toothing profile of the toothed sector **147**, **148** comprises teeth **157**, **158** with a thrusting side **157a**, **158a** facing towards the second end **145**, **146** of the rocker arm **141**, **142** and a release side **157b**, **158b** facing the opposite way. The thrusting side **157a**, **158a** is oriented—with

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reference to a cross section with respect to the axis A—so that a half-line D1 tangent to the thrusting side **157a**, **158a** and oriented towards the outside of the device **100** forms an angle α equal to or greater than 90° with a half-line D2 that from the thrusting side **157a**, **158a** points towards the pivot axis B, C of the rocker arm **141**, **142**.

The operation of the device **100** will now be described with reference in particular to FIGS. 6-18; it should be noted that every angular movement of the toothed crown **114** corresponds to an identical angular movement of the cable-winding bobbin **112** and thus to a gearshifting.

FIG. 6 shows the neutral position of the lever **131**, which corresponds to a non-gearshifting situation, with the gearshift having a certain ratio and keeping it. In this position, as already stated, the pointer **160** is engaged with the first portion **155**, **156** of the cam profiles **151**, **152** of both of the rocker arms **141**, **142**. No toothed sector **147**, **148** is engaged with the toothed crown **114**.

From this position, the lever **131** is moved by the cyclist in the direction **105**. As shown in FIG. 7, as soon as the lever **131** has reached a minimum angular movement, the pointer **160** disengages from the cam profile **152** of the rocker arm **142**, which is thus thrust by the thruster **161** with the toothed sector **148** towards the toothed crown **114**.

As the movement of the lever **131** proceeds, as shown in FIGS. 8 and 9, the engagement of the toothed sector **148** with the toothed crown **114** ensures that the toothed crown moves angularly together with the lever **131**. This movement will thus be continued by the cyclist until the angular position corresponding to the gearshifting that is wanted is reached; indeed, it is possible to move the lever **131** by a small angle to obtain single gearshifting (going to an immediately greater or smaller ratio), as well as by a greater angle, corresponding to multiple gearshifting (double, triple or even more).

Once the desired angular position has thus been reached, the cyclist interrupts the thrust on the lever **131** and leaves it. While the toothed crown **114** is kept still in the angular position reached by the indexing assembly **113**, the lever **131** that has been left free tends to be brought back towards its neutral position by the action of the spring **133** (FIG. 10); the lever **131** thus starts to move in the angular direction **104**. Given the geometry of the teeth **158** and of the rocker arm **142**, and also given the non-engagement of the pointer **160** in the cam profile **152**, the rocker arm **142** can rotate in the anti-clockwise direction around the pivot axis C (overcoming just the elastic force of the thruster **161**), thus disengaging its toothed sector **148** from the toothed crown **114** (FIG. 11). In practice, the toothed sector **148** rides over the teeth of the toothed crown one by one, until the lever **131** goes back into the neutral position (FIG. 12).

Eventually, gearshifting has been carried out, single or multiple, and at the end the lever **131** is back into its neutral starting position, ready for more gearshifting, in the same or other direction. FIGS. 13 to 18, similarly to FIGS. 7-12, show gearshifting in the opposite direction; given the total symmetry of operation, these steps will not be described.

Of course, a man skilled in the art can bring modifications and variants to what has been described, without departing from the scope of protection defined by the following claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. An actuation device for a control cable for a bicycle gearshift, comprising:

- a casing, configured for attachment on an end of a handlebar of the bicycle,
- a bobbin on which to wind the cable, angularly mobile in the casing around a main axis of the device,

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a drive mechanism, acting on the bobbin to rotate the bobbin in a first and in a second angular direction around the main axis of the device,
 indexing means to removably hold the bobbin in predetermined angular positions,
 the drive mechanism comprising:
 a lever that is biased towards a neutral position, angularly mobile with respect to the casing around the main axis of the device, in the first or in the second angular direction from the neutral position to obtain downward or upward gearshifting,
 an internally toothed crown, non-rotatably mounted to the bobbin and angularly mobile in the casing,
 elastic means acting between the lever and the casing that bias the lever into the neutral position, and
 a ratchet mechanism between the lever and the toothed crown
 that comprises:
 two opposite rocker arms, hinged on the lever according to two pivot axes parallel to one another and to the main axis of the device, each of said rocker arms having an arched shape wrapping around the main axis of the device and extending from a first end to a second end, wherein the first end of the first rocker arm is proximal to the first end of the second rocker arm and the second end of the first rocker arm faces towards the second end of the second rocker arm,
 a toothed sector, formed on each rocker arm on an outer side thereof, proximal to the respective second end, said sector having a toothing profile for engaging the toothing of the toothed crown, wherein the crown is in an axial position corresponding to that of the toothed sectors along the main axis of the device,
 a cam profile, formed on each rocker arm on an inner side thereof, adjacent to the respective first end,
 a thruster to thrust each rocker arm around a pivot axis of the rocker arm to thrust the second end of each of the rocker arms away from the main axis of the device,
 a pointer that is stationary with respect to the casing and facing radially outwards with respect to the main axis of the device, engaged with at least one cam profile on the rocker arms,
 each cam profile is configured such that:
 when the pointer is engaged with the cam profile of one of the rocker arms, the toothed sector of the one rocker arm is positioned away from the toothed crown, and
 when the pointer is disengaged from the cam profile, the toothed sector of the one rocker arm is thrust into engagement with the toothed crown by the thruster.

2. The actuation device according to claim 1, wherein the thruster is a spring that is compressed between the second end of each of the two rocker arms.

3. The actuation device according to claim 1, wherein when the lever is in the neutral position the pointer is engaged with a first portion of the cam profile of both of the rocker arms.

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4. The actuation device according to claim 3, wherein the elastic means comprise a spring acting between the casing and the lever to take the lever into the neutral position.

5. The actuation device according to claim 1, wherein each of the rocker arms is hinged to the lever by a respective pin.

6. The actuation device according to claim 1, wherein the pivot axis of each rocker arm is positioned closer to the first end of each rocker arm than the second end of each rocker arm.

7. The actuation device according to claim 1, wherein the toothing profile of the toothed sector and of the toothed crown promote snap disengagement, one tooth at a time, when the toothed sector moves with the lever back into the neutral position of the lever while the toothed crown remains stationary.

8. The actuation device according to claim 7, wherein the toothing profile of the toothed sector comprises teeth with a thrusting side facing towards the second end of each rocker arm and an oppositely situated release side, in which the thrusting side is oriented with reference to a cross section with respect to the main axis of the device so that a first half-line tangent to the thrusting side and oriented towards the outside of the device forms an angle greater than or equal to 90° with a second half-line from the thrusting side that points towards the pivot axis of each rocker arm.

9. An actuation device for controlling a cable associated with a bicycle gearshift comprising:
 a casing configured for attachment on an end of a bicycle handlebar to secure a body of the device;
 a cable winding bobbin mounted within the casing and having an internally toothed crown;
 an indexer that holds the bobbin in a predetermined angular position;
 a drive mechanism that includes a lever that is actionable from a neutral position to obtain downward or upward gearshifting and rotates the bobbin to achieve the predetermined angular position;
 a ratchet mechanism, located between the lever and the toothed crown, that includes opposite rocker arms that comprise arched cams with profiles that curve away from each other, and a toothed sector on each respective rocker arm for engaging the toothed crown;
 a pointer that is stationary with respect to the casing and is selectively engaged by both of the rocker arms;
 a thruster that urges each of the rocker arms towards respective neutral positions with respect to the pointer;
 whereby engagement between a respective cam profile and the pointer causes one rocker arm's toothed sector to move away from the toothed crown, and the other rocker arm's toothed sector to move toward engagement with the toothed crown.

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